Amendments to the Claims

Please amend the claims as shown below.

1. (Currently Amended) A position budgeting and control system for evaluating and controlling human resource budgets, comprising:

a central processing unit;

input/output means;

at least one ~~data base means containing~~ database storing human resource data relating to human resource objects;

a commitment engine~~;~~, wherein the ~~said~~ commitment engine:

~~retrieving~~ retrieves human resource relevant data from said at least one ~~data base means and~~ database,

~~evaluating~~ evaluates a human resource budget for a given human resource object for a predefined period of time on the basis of said retrieved data,

creates an encumbrance for the given human resource object, the encumbrance fixedly reserving a corresponding budget in the position budgeting and control system for the given human resource object,

~~said commitment engine further storing~~ stores a result of said evaluation and the encumbrance, ~~and~~

~~monitoring~~ monitors said budget during said predefined period of time, and

adjusts the encumbrance according to changes to human resource relevant data.

2. (Currently Amended) The system according to claim 1, wherein said commitment engine comprises an administrator module, an object collector module and a data collector module, said administrator module being connected to said object collector module and said data collector module, said administrator module administering data flow to and from said object and data collector modules, said object collector module retrieving objects from said at least one ~~data base means~~ database and said data collector means collecting data from said at least one ~~data base means~~ database and writing updated human resource data to said at least one ~~data base means~~ database.

3. (Previously Presented) The system according to claim 1, said commitment engine further comprising a creator module for creating budget control documents, an error handling module for handling errors and triggering workflows to overcome an error, and a transfer module for transferring budget data to exterior accountancy, said administrator module administering data flow to and from said creator, said error handling and said transfer modules.

4. (Previously Presented) The system according to claim 1, wherein said human resource data consists of position data and individual employee data.

5. (Previously Presented) The system according to claim 1, wherein said commitment engine calculates individual employee salary on the basis of said retrieved data.

6. (Previously Presented) The system according to claim 5, wherein said commitment engine calculates said individual employee salary for said predefined period of time as a budget and monitors said budget during said period of time.

7. (Previously Presented) The system according to claim 6, wherein said commitment engine combines several of said individual employee salary budgets into a department or cost center budget.

8. (Previously Presented) The system according to claim 7, wherein said commitment engine monitors said department or cost center budget during said period of time.

9. (Previously Presented) The system according to claim 6, wherein said monitoring involves a comparison of said calculated budget with actually effected salary payments.

10. (Previously Presented) The system according to claim 4, wherein said commitment engine calculates position cost simulations for employee positions on the basis of said position data for said predefined period of time, the sum of said position cost simulations being the potential position budget for an employer entity or sub-entity for said predefined period of time.

11. (Previously Presented) The system according to claim 4, wherein said commitment engine calculates employee cost simulations for an existing employee on the basis of said individual employee data for said predefined period of time, the sum of said employee cost simulations being the actual employee budget for an employer entity or sub-entity for said predefined period of time.

12. (Previously Presented) The system according to claim 10, wherein said commitment engine provides an indication for a hiring decision regarding hiring of new personnel on the basis of the difference between said potential position budget and said actual employee budget.

13. (Previously Presented) The system according to claim 4, wherein said commitment engine automatically recognizes changes to said human resource data that are relevant to said budget and re-evaluates said budget.

14. (Currently Amended) A computer-implemented method for evaluating and controlling human resource budgets, comprising:

retrieving human resource relevant data from a ~~data base means~~ database containing human resource data;

~~and~~ evaluating a human resource budget for a given human resource object for a predefined period of time on the basis of said retrieved data~~, and~~;

creating an encumbrance for the given human resource object, the encumbrance fixedly reserving a corresponding budget for the given human resource object;

storing a result of the evaluation and the encumbrance;

~~storing and~~ monitoring said budget during said predefined period of time; and

adjusting the encumbrance according to changes to human resource relevant data.

15. (Canceled).

16. (Currently Amended) A computer-implemented method according to claim [[15]]14, ~~further comprising:~~ wherein adjusting the encumbrance corresponds to continuously adapting said reserved funds by subtracting effected salary payments.

17. (Previously Presented) A computer- implemented method according to claim 14, further comprising:

on the basis of a budget preparation, performing a reservation step for a human resource position only, then performing a pre-commitment step for occupied and vacant human resource positions only on the basis of retrieved specific position data, and then performing a commitment step for human resource objects only on the basis of retrieved specific object data, and subsequent adaptation of the results of the respective prior steps.

18. (Original) A computer-implemented method according to claim 17, further comprising:

reserving funds for said predefined period of time on the basis of said commitment step.

19. (Previously Presented) A computer- implemented method according to claim 17, further comprising:

continuous adaptation of the results of said pre-commitment and commitment steps based on changes to said human resource position data.

20. (Previously Presented) A computer- implemented method according to claim 17, further comprising:

continuous adaptation of the results of said pre-commitment and commitment steps based on changes to said human resource object data.

21. (Currently Amended) A computer program product for evaluating and controlling human resource budgets embodied by a computer readable medium, the computer program product comprising instructions to cause a processor of a computer to execute the following steps:

retrieving human resource relevant data from a database containing human resource data;

~~and~~ evaluating a human resource budget for a given human resource object for a predefined period of time on the basis of said retrieved data~~, and~~;

creating an encumbrance for the given human resource object, the encumbrance fixedly reserving a corresponding budget for the given human resource object;

storing a result of the evaluation and the encumbrance;

~~storing and~~ monitoring said budget during said predefined period of time; and

adjusting the encumbrance according to changes to human resource relevant data.

22. (Canceled)

23. (Currently Amended) A computer program product according to claim [[22]]21, ~~further comprising instructions for:~~ wherein adjusting the encumbrance corresponds to continuously adapting said reserved funds by subtracting effected salary payments.

24. (Previously Presented) A computer program product according to claim 21, further comprising instructions for:

on the basis of a budget preparation, performing a reservation step for a human resource position only, then performing a pre-commitment step for occupied and vacant human resource positions only on the basis of retrieved specific position data, and then performing a commitment step for human resource objects only on the basis of retrieved specific object data, and subsequent adaptation of the results of the respective prior steps.

25. (Original) A computer program product according to claim 24, further comprising instructions for:

reserving funds for said predefined period of time on the basis of said commitment step.

26. (Previously Presented) A computer program product according to claim 24, further comprising instructions for:

continuous adaptation of the results of said pre-commitment and commitment steps based on changes to said human resource position data.

27. (Previously Presented) A computer program product according to claim 24, further comprising instructions for:

continuously adapting the results of said pre-commitment and commitment steps based on changes to said human resource object data.

28. (Canceled)